

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 22 August 2012

Subject: Literacy and Numeracy - Benchmarking

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report advises Members on the baseline performance of literacy and numeracy in West Dunbartonshire at P3, P7 and S2.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Educational Services Committee is recommended to
- (a) note the contents of this report; and
 - (b) request a further report which details how Educational Services will improve literacy and numeracy across West Dunbartonshire.

3. Background

- 3.1** Curriculum for Excellence is now implemented in all West Dunbartonshire's schools and previous "5-14" measures are no longer a relevant indicator of attainment.
- 3.2** Members asked for a briefing paper in November 2011 which would give information as to how progress would be measured given the demise of the 5-14 indicators. This is included as a Background Paper for this report.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Children's progress within Curriculum for Excellence is assessed using a range of strategies. Assessment is absolutely integral to the learning and teaching process.
- 4.2** In West Dunbartonshire we are committed to the individual learning journey of each child. The assessment of each child incorporates what they can say, make, do and write across the curriculum.
- 4.3** A further strategy to build an authority wide picture of progress was introduced in May 2012. This included a series of standard assessments at P3, P7 and S2. Members are asked to note that this strategy is but one in a range of approaches.
- 4.4** In these assessments, West Dunbartonshire pupils were benchmarked against a group of pupils chosen from schools across the UK whose

performance was representative of a national standard. This is referred to below as the national benchmark.

- 4.5** The assessments produce standard age scores for pupils. These are created by converting the pupils' actual scores in the tests to standardised scores which take into account their age in years and months. This gives an indication of how each pupil is performing as compared to other pupils of the same age.
- 4.6** The Head Teachers and Quality Improvement Offices were invited to attend support sessions to reach an understanding both of the purpose of the assessments and of the way in which they would be used.
- 4.7** Baseline assessment is already in place in nursery and P1 classes and the results are used to inform improvement planning and to support next steps in children's learning.
- 4.8** The new baseline measures for literacy and numeracy at P3, P7 and S2 will be used to focus on specific areas requiring improvement across West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.9** The high level messages emerging from the standard assessments indicate the following:

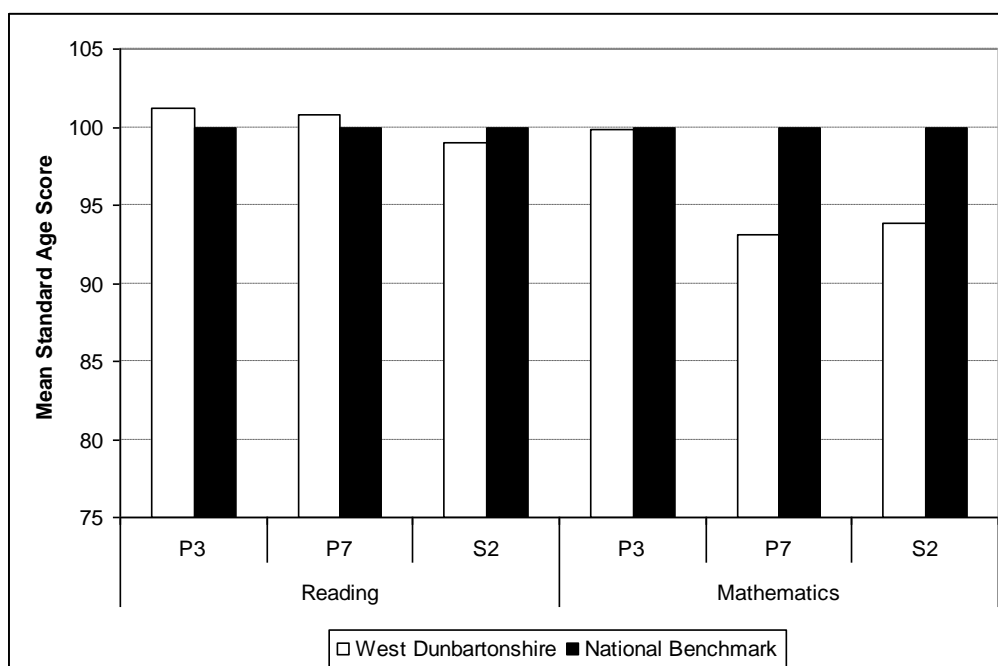
Reading

At P3 West Dunbartonshire performed significantly higher than the national benchmark; at P7 there was no significant difference between the national benchmark and West Dunbartonshire; by S2 performance in reading was significantly lower than the national benchmark.

Mathematics

P3 in West Dunbartonshire performed in line with the national benchmark; P7 in West Dunbartonshire performed significantly lower than the national benchmark; and S2 in West Dunbartonshire performed significantly lower than the national benchmark.

Results can be seen in the chart below:



The chart shows the performance of West Dunbartonshire pupils by Mean Standard Age Scores for each tested stage in both Reading and Mathematics tests compared to the national benchmarks for the same tests.

- 4.10** Further analysis of mathematics at P7 and at S2 will be undertaken to establish how best to improve this measure.
- 4.11** Discussion will now take place between the Quality Improvement Service and Head Teachers to plan for improvement. The work being progressed within the Family Groups of primary schools with similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics to share best practice will be influenced from the findings of the standard assessments.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues related to this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications related to this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Failure to address issues relating to improving attainment and achievement will disadvantage our children and young people.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1** Educational Services has carried out a screening in equality for this report. The report was found not to be relevant to the specified equality duty because the content provides an update on service delivery rather than stating a change of policy.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The introduction of a series of standard assessments as part of a range of approaches to assessment was discussed with Head Teachers, Quality Improvement Officers and teacher unions.
- 9.2** Legal Services have been consulted on the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Council has identified four main strategic priorities for 2011/2012, namely Social & Economic Regeneration, Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, and Fit for Purpose Services.
- 10.2** Raising expectation and aspirations with our young people will ultimately lead to regeneration. Investing in their future is fundamental to the values of our Council. Our staff are our most valuable resource and they have the skills to improve outcomes for young people. Success in improving attainment and achievement will impact positively on Educational Services and West Dunbartonshire Council.

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Appendices: None

Background Paper: Briefing Note to Audit and Performance Review Committee, Subject: Reporting Pupil Attainment; Date: November 2011

Wards Affected: All wards